

Narrative for River Protection Grant 2010 Application

Description of Property

Two parcels totaling 9.90 acres are located in Section 14 of the Town of New Glarus adjacent to County Road U. One is defined as Lot 3 of Certified Survey Map 3627 which is 6.43 acres in size and the other by a metes and bounds description as follows: Prt NW4 NW4 cont 8.53 A Prt SW4 NW4 cont 12.93 A (lyg E river) Exc CSM 3626 & 3627 cont in all 3.47 A m/l. The property is an undeveloped parcel with a mix of native plants and non-native trees, shrubs, and plants. The Parks Commission would like to oversee the eventual restoration of the native plants in order to provide a natural habitat to many species of native birds, reptiles, and act to purify the river water for Brown Trout. The property is currently owned by the Swiss Center of North America which has been offered for purchase and is listed by Remax Preferred Realty under MLS #1580090.

The Little Sugar River supports many species of aquatic life and is best known by those who fish in this area for its Brown River Trout. The property is listed as within Zone A of the FEMA Flood Insurance map which limits its development or agrarian use. Furthermore, the Town's Land Division and Re-division Ordinance adopted October 13, 1997 specifies that this property is required Open Space restricted from residential building to support a Large Lot division of property to the west.

Purpose of the Grant

The Town of New Glarus Parks Commission would like to purchase the 9.90 acres described above in order to preserve this natural resource and the associated species it protects. The New Glarus Parks Commission understands that the River Preservation Grant can be used for up to \$50,000 for such a purchase and cannot total more than 75% of the documented costs associated with the purchase.

The Commission's medium-term goal is for this property to form a linchpin for the development of a trail to extend south along the Little Sugar River to a local historical landmark, the Swiss Shooting Barn to the south and west. Ideally the trail would be constructed as a raised wooden walkway to minimize its impact upon the function of the native plants and yet allow visitors to view the subtle diversity of the site close-up. Streambank improvement is another goal requiring minimal effort to remove existing non-native tree species, limited dredging/contouring of the riverbed, and installation of lunkers to promote natural regeneration of native fish and to lessen the need for DNR restocking practices.

Recent preservation efforts on the Shooting Barn have been performed by members of the New Glarus Vision Incorporated under the supervision of a Building Inspector, resulting in the straightening of the structure, replacement of the roof, installation of fire extinguishers, installation of a handicap accessible portapotty and repainting. Rewiring of the structure has begun this spring of 2010 by a licensed contractor/electrician. The structure and the associated surrounding property has been the annual location for the New Glarus Volksfest, had been the location of an annual competitive shooting competition (moved to the Wilhelm Tell Play Grounds recently for safety concerns), and since 2008 a

terminus point for the Alphonman Triathlon. The property has a raised concrete stage where a number of local ethnic musical acts perform during these festivals including the Mannerchor and Kinderchor. The Shooting Barn is being promoted for private parties, reunions, and receptions and as improvements continue it will be in use on a more continuous basis.

Long-term goals for acquisition of the aforementioned property are to extend the proposed trail north to Old Madison Road; the road was widened and striped for pedestrian traffic in 2008. The trail would also extend south and ideally meet existing sidewalks within the Village of New Glarus providing many Town and Village residents additional recreational opportunities as well as alternate methods of foot traffic that are safe, scenic, and sustainable, promoting less dependence upon transportation by car.

Mid-term and long-term objectives depend upon acquisition of the primary property for which this grant is being written, but if those goals are delayed or not possible in the future it will have no bearing on the importance of acquiring the primary property for the purposes of preservation.

Existing Mechanisms to Meet Short-term, Medium-term, and Long-term Goals

The Town's Parks Commission has requested contributions to a declared Sinking Fund as a percentage of its annual budget since 2006. Currently the total in the Town Hall/Town Park Sinking Fund is \$25,172.63 as of March 11, 2010. By July 1, 2010 that figure will grow to an estimated \$30,172.63. Another Sinking Fund which will probably be utilized for the implementation of the long-term goals is designated for Community Partnerships and currently totals \$14,711.72. By July 1, 2010 this fund is anticipated to grow to \$17,711.72. Finally, the Town of New Glarus has been collecting Impact Fees at the issuance of each new residential building permit since spring of 2007. Because of the current slump in building, the total collected to date for parks purposes is \$9,002.96 for the purposes of Community Park Land Acquisition, Community Park Improvements, trails, and supporting the replacement of the poolhouse in the Village of New Glarus Park.

The Town's Park Plan supports the goal of a trails system to connect Town residents to the Village and to the existing Sugar River Trail and Badger Trail systems as well as the conservation and of important parcels of property for the sake of preservation. Currently the Town Parks Commission has acted as steward for an existing oak savanna and prairie remnant located within Sections 1 and 12 of the Town of New Glarus off of Windmill Ridge Road. In 2009 the Parks Commission contracted for the removal non-native tree and plant species including their rootballs from the property through the use of a Fecon device. A controlled burn is scheduled this spring of 2010 with reseeding of native plants to begin after further assessment of the property later in the same year. The land was gifted to the Town by a local developer and will eventually serve primarily as a conservation area, a natural park with a mowed walking path, and an educational resource for local schools. Similarly, the natural riparian habitat along the Little Sugar River can become an educational resource for local schools once access is simplified by the installation of a raised boardwalk and extension to the Shooting Barn which will act as a parking site and staging area.

Description of the Town and Village of New Glarus

The pre-historic to colonial population of New Glarus was comprised of the native peoples of the area. French explorers and traders were frequent visitors to the area shortly after European exploration of this continent began. More recently, the area became the only colony of Switzerland in the United States. Originally conceived as an agricultural community the limitations of the land soon promoted the raising of dairy cattle and the associated production of dairy products. Today New Glarus is a commuter community for the larger Madison, Wisconsin area as well as a tourist destination for thousands each year who are attracted to the two locations of the New Glarus Brewing Company, numerous festivals, and inviting traditional Swiss architecture.

New Glarus is located in northwest Green County. Currently Green County has one County Park, two boat launches overseen by the County, and one prairie remnant managed by the same. The county is blessed with a wealth of open space and beautiful vistas in the Driftless area of the state. However, no long-range plan to preserve these natural attributes is in place or being developed and the New Glarus Parks Commission hopes to do what it can to preserve the natural beauty, history, and quality of life for generations to come.

Revised 100408